



## Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 176

### GROWING OUR WORKFORCE

**As you are keenly aware, the mission profile of the Coast Guard changed significantly on 11 September 2001 and the impact on operations tempo and resulting personnel tempo has been dramatic.** Homeland Security has become a national priority and the Coast Guard is an integral player. In the short term, our response has been to divert existing active duty, reserve, and civilian resources to our significantly expanded Maritime Homeland Security (MHLS) mission. This situation will exist until we can acquire new, dedicated resources to handle this relatively sudden, step increase in our organization's workload. **The ensuing billet and position growth across all our workforces (active duty, reserve, and civilian) is expected to be unprecedented.** Especially since a large part of the military workforce growth is at the E-5 to E-7 and O-4/O-5 levels, this is not something we can make happen overnight. **To "grow" these people, we're looking at 5 to 12 years from the time they are recruited! On the other hand, there will be unprecedented advancement and promotion opportunities for a majority of our workforce.**

**Before 9/11/01, we were actually expecting our active duty enlisted and officer workforces to decrease in size during FY02.** Instead, through Supplemental budget action, our FY02 active duty workforce **grew** by over 300 billets. In addition, we are growing the SelRes by 200 billets, and our civilian workforce authorization is up by 220. Growth in FY03 and FY04 is expected to be much higher. In FY03 our active duty military billets are expected to increase by over 1,000 (850 enlisted and 180 officer), the SelRes by another 800 (to 9000 total), and our civilian workforce authorization by another 225. In FY04, the anticipated expansion is even larger--nearly 1,800 additional active duty billets, another 1,000 SelRes billets, and another 210 civilian positions. That equates to a total growth of over 5,800 billets/positions in just 3 years. Although FY05 is still uncertain, additional growth of a similar magnitude is also anticipated. We are clearly bumping up against our accession training infrastructure limits, especially if we grow our workforces "the old fashion way," through Cape May, A-Schools, the Academy and OCS. **To meet this challenge will require a multitude of HR business strategies, namely:**

(1) A focus on **RETENTION** (What can we do to keep you in the Workforce?);

(2) An increased **RECRUITING** capability, including the Coast Guard's first civilian recruiting force and dedicated officer recruiting force;

(3) Increased Recruiting and Retention **INCENTIVES**;

(4) Increased **LATERAL ENTRY** Programs (Extended Active Duty Contracts, Retired Recall, Open Rate Lists, Reserve Integration, Prior Service Solicitation); coupled with the use of the recent

(5) **PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER** authorities, which temporarily remove legislated requirements such mandatory separations and retirements; and,

(6) Extending the use of **Title 10**, which gives us the authority to call-up Reserve personnel as required during this period of national emergency.

**In general, nearly every rating will be affected in some way during this elongated growth period, with impacts most keenly felt within the BM rating.** Not only are we significantly growing BMs for MHLS, we are also growing them for Coastal SAR Group and Station staffing enhancements. The BM rating is also affected by the implementation of the Joint Rating Review (JRR), which continues to be on track for a QM-BM rating merger in July 2003. During this same period, we will award and step out on our long awaited Deepwater (IDS) contract.

**We've been working to overcome a cumbersome hiring system that constrains the civilian workforce.**

While most of the requisite improvements depend on Congressional action, this has not kept us from revising internal processes and procedures to get lists of job applicants into supervisors' hands faster. We have delegated more civilian HR authority to the CSAs in the field and eliminated duplication of effort at the Hub. We are in the final stages of deploying an automated classification and staffing system (Avue system), which should provide major gains in HR efficiency. At the same time, we're reviewing Coast Guard business rules to reduce unintended bottlenecks.

**Clearly, we're plowing new ground. Our goal is to acquire a fully stocked, fully qualified workforce as fast as possible.** Leadership from the deck plates to the top of the Coast Guard has never been more critical. All of us will be forced to prioritize...even more so than we have done in the past. **Inherent with workforce growth of this nature are gapped billets, billet fills with relatively junior personnel, and billet fills with personnel lacking in some of the required skill sets.** We will endeavor to minimize these conditions by reducing workforce churn, accessing as many skilled personnel through lateral entry as practicable, and increasing both A and C School and LDC throughput. Filling critical MHLS, SAR, and Operational billets will have priority. During this ramp up period, it's essential that program managers articulate priorities; but of equal importance, they must also be able to articulate where vacancies can best be tolerated.

**While the Service adds billets, we cannot lose sight of the importance of workforce diversity as we acquire people.** We must press hard to create an environment that allows us to become an employer of choice for the diverse demographic workforce of America -- today and into the future. In order to continue to provide the highest level of service to the American people, we must reaffirm and demonstrate at every level of leadership that we are dedicated to effectively managing the diversity within our ranks. We cannot afford complacency if we are to attract and retain the best and the brightest talent our nation has to offer from every race, color, creed, and religion. The motto of our country must truly be our own: "Out of many, one."

**Which brings me to my final point, that retention has never been more vital to the Coast Guard! It's the key to success in building our workforce.** It's how we keep the experience and skills required to accomplish our missions. Right now, the trends are in the right direction across all our workforces, officer, enlisted and

civilian. We need to keep this as "job one." **As always, the key to retention is within the lifelines, that is, at the unit level.**

**I urge all of you to keep a vigilant eye for potential “new employees,” while at the same time ensuring we retain the quality personnel we already have onboard doing the work of the Coast Guard.** What I see in human resources literature throughout the country is that organizations are looking at employee retention in a whole new light. The HR "speak" today is about "re-recruiting" your employees each and every day -- not just a one time effort. It will take each one of us as supervisors to come to work each day and ask ourselves, "What can I do today to "recruit" my people to remain in the Coast Guard?" The Gallup 12Q is just one such tool that will be available to help us in this regard. I appreciate you support in this challenge!

Regards, FL Ames



[Flag Voice Contents](#)

This page is maintained by [HR Webmaster \(CG-1A\)](#)